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Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Letter dated 10 April 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Serbia and Montenegro to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Belgrade Declaration, adopted at the Sixth Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the South-East Europe Cooperation Process, held in Belgrade on 9 April 2003 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 60, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dejan **Šahović**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 10 April 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Serbia and Montenegro to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE SOUTH EAST EUROPE COOPERATION PROCESS

BELGRADE DECLARATION

Belgrade, 9 April 2003

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of Participating and Observer Countries of the South East European Cooperation Process, meeting in Belgrade on 9 April 2003, have noted with pleasure that cooperation and consolidation of regional stability have been further promoted since the last Summit held in Tirana in March 2002. We have expressed our satisfaction with the results achieved and we are more than ever ready to make fresh efforts to achieve democratic goals, values and ideals that we subscribe to.

2. We were deeply saddened by the brutal assassination of Serbian Prime Minister dr Zoran Djindjić. We have again condemned in the strongest possible terms the pervasive and corrosive effects of organized crime on peace and stability in South East Europe.

3. We have welcomed the steps taken by the Serbian Government to ensure sustained momentum in the Government's reform programme and pledge our continued support. We have welcomed the accession of Serbia and Montenegro to the Council of Europe.

4. Having exchanged views on the situation in Iraq, we expressed our sincere wish that the conflict end as soon as possible with a minimum loss of life and human suffering. Iraq's sovereignty, political unity and territorial integrity should be preserved, and its territory should be freed from all weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate our commitment to the fundamental role of the United Nations in the international system and to the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe that the UN must play a central and substantial role in this crisis, including the humanitarian assistance and the reconstruction of Iraq. The rights of the Iraqi citizens, including those belonging to different ethnic groups can only be assured under a pluralistic democratic political system. The natural resources of Iraq should be the common wealth and property of the Iraqi nation as a whole.We are convinced, now more than ever before, of the need to reinvigorate the Peace Process and lay the foundation for peace and cooperation in the Middle East.

I

5. We have reiterated our commitment to the basic principles and objectives of the Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South East Europe and all other documents that have been adopted so far within the South East European Cooperation Process. We are firmly determined to maintain peace and stability, to promote good-neighbourly relations, strengthen cooperation and achieve full prosperity of the region. We share common values and a lasting orientation towards democratization, rule of law, respect for human rights and the rights of persons belonging to national and ethnic minorities, free flow of people and goods and the development of a viable market economy, recognizing that these constitute the foundations upon which our societies and states are based.

6. We have reaffirmed, once again, the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law and expressed our full support for all efforts being made to promote cooperative security in the region. Further strengthening of cooperation and the promotion of stability, human rights, economic development and social cohesion would be our best answer to those who insist on exclusiveness, violence and extremism. We have stressed, once again, the importance of the implementation of the Dayton-Paris Peace Accord and other relevant agreements and United Nations Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 1244 and 1345, which are vital for further stability in the region. We have pledged our commitment to full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia including the bringing of all war crime indictees to justice. Recalling the full engagement of the European Union in our region, we have also welcomed the recent launching of the European Union Police Mission and Operation "Concordia". We believe that the time has come for our region to be recognized as a region of tolerance, reconciliation and openness. In this context, the South East European Cooperation Process can and should be the promoter of these ideas.

7. We have reaffirmed our strong commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms, which threatens stability and security of our region, our states and the lives of our citizens. Full attention must continue to be paid to determining the roots of this scourge so as to eradicate it. This should be done in a way that would respect human rights and principles of international law, as well as through strengthening cooperation at national, regional and international level.

II

8. The region of South East Europe is gradually becoming a better place, where priorities are consistent with the European standards and reflect a common aspiration to join the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, as well as our determination to assume regional ownership. We have also reiterated our commitment to pursue further democratic and economic reforms and to tackle the main challenges: combat organized crime, trafficking of all kinds and corruption, strengthen institutional capacity, undertake reform of the judiciary, perform structural reforms and alleviate unemployment.

9. We have initiated important activities in the implementation of the priorities that we have set, thus contributing to the transformation and promotion of our regional initiative. The South East European Cooperation Process is the best reflection and expression of the common aspirations and solidarity of all the participating countries of the region aimed at achieving a clear perspective for our integration into the ongoing European processes. Our aim is that all countries of the region become members of the EU in due time and thus take full part in the shaping of the future of Europe. Progress on this road will, first and foremost, be the result of our own efforts and performances.

10. The enlargement of the EU and NATO with new members strengthens our European aspirations. In this respect, we have welcomed the decisions of the EU Copenhagen Summit and the NATO Prague Summit, which have opened new and clear perspectives to some of the participating states of the South East Europe Cooperation Process towards their full integration into the EU and NATO. We consider that this year will be crucial for a further development of the EU. The Convention on the future of the European Union and the signing of the Accession Treaty with the candidate countries would make it possible for the EU to be further strengthened. In this context, we expect progress also on the road to Europe of the candidate countries of South East Europe, as well as concrete steps for enriching the EU policy towards the Stabilization and Association Process countries with experience from the enlargement process. In that regard, we expect all countries of the region to be associated to the ongoing debate on the future of Europe.

11. We have welcomed the continued strong commitment by the European Union to our region, in particular as expressed by the Brussels March 2003 European Council. We have strongly supported the priorities of the current EU Presidency for the Western Balkans. Aware of our present priorities and with a view to fully joining the current European processes, we expect the upcoming EU Summit to be held in Thessaloniki in June this year to provide inter alia a further impetus to the strengthening of the Stabilization and Association Process, including through increased financial support. This will render the European prospect more visible and credible to the peoples of the region. For their part, these countries will reaffirm their commitment to reforms and to regional cooperation at the EU Thessaloniki Summit.

III

12. We are satisfied with the results achieved in the course of the past year, within the framework of the commonly defined priorities. The meetings of Ministers of Trade, Telecommunications, Energy and Home Affairs proved to be useful for all participating states. For the purpose of promoting existing and developing new areas of cooperation we believe that their outcome needs to be followed up with:
    - Combating terrorism and organized crime on a regional level;
    - Developing the network of bilateral Free Trade Agreements, with a view of creating a free trade area in South East Europe;
    - Establishment of a regional electricity market, with a view to expanding it with other sources of energy (gas, oil);
    - Development and integration of telecommunications by implementing SEE Agenda;
    - Development and integration of transportation infrastructure systems;
    - Modernization of border control and liberalization and harmonization of visa regimes respecting EU commitments of the participating states;

13. These are specific goals that we should aspire to and that will ensure our faster alignment with the European standards and conditions, with the aim of integrating into the European structures. Activities related to concrete concerns in other areas of mutual interest should also be encouraged. To this end, we have expressed our readiness to put additional efforts: into removing all obstacles standing in the way of a speedy, safe and sustainable return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes; protecting religious and cultural sites; review of the history text books; development of Euro-regions and other forms of cross-border cooperation; prevention of conflicts and early warning.

14. We have emphasized our firm belief that the strengthening of regional cooperation in South East Europe is essential. We have welcomed further enhancement of the South East Europe Cooperation Process, including reactivation of the Troika, work of the Committee of Political Directors on a regular basis and the strengthening of the Parliamentarian dimension of the Process. In particular, we shall encourage more frequent contacts among the members of the Parliaments of the participating states. We have also welcomed the work of the Informal Consultative Committee, as an important channel of regional consultations between our Process, the European Union and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. We have, therefore, expressed our determination not only to go ahead with the activities already undertaken, promoting the South East European Cooperation Process as a whole, but also to continue substantial efforts to improve working methods of the Process.

15. We have welcomed the Progress Report of the Committee of Political Directors on the enhancement of the South East European Cooperation Process and expressed our satisfaction with their past overall activities. We have noted that several proposals submitted by the participating states enrich even more our activities and tasked the Chairman-in-Office and the Committee of Political Directors to examine them with a view to submitting a Progress Report on the next Ministerial Meeting of the South East European Cooperation Process.

16. We were particularly pleased that cooperation has been established among various regional initiatives in South East Europe. We believe that further advancement of this cooperation and effective exchange of information and experiences would avoid overlapping and to create a synergy in the fulfillment of joint activities and projects in the region. We welcome the creation of the Business Advisory Council of South East Europe in Skopje on 10 December 2002 and its intention to work closely with the South East European Cooperation Process, enhancing regional cooperation, regional ownership and sustainable development. Accordingly, we invite Business Advisory Council of South East Europe to submit concrete proposals to the South East European Cooperation Process.

17. We have taken note with appreciation of the Report of the Chairman-in-Office on the activities of the South East European Cooperation Process in the period from April 2002 through April 2003. We have agreed that this practice should be continued.

18. We have expressed our gratitude to the current Chairman-in-Office for the progress made by our Process during its Presidency and the excellent organization of this Summit.

IV

19. The Summit was attended by the following Heads of State or Government and Delegation of the countries of South East European Cooperation Process, H.E. Mr. Alfred Moisiu; H.E. Mr. Dragan Čović; H.E. Mr. Georgi Parvanov; H.E. Mr. Costas Simitis; H.E. Mr. Boris Trajkovski; H.E. Mr. Nicolae Vacaroiu; H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan; and H.E. Mr. Svetozar Marović. H.E. Mr. Stjepan Mesić attended the Summit as an observer.

20. The Summit was attended by the following Ministers of Foreign Affairs: H.E. Mr. Ilir Meta; H.E. Mr. Mladen Ivanić; H.E. Mr. Solomon Passy; H.E. Mr. George Papandreou; H.E. Ms. Ilinka Mitreva; H.E. Mr. Mircea Geoana; H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gul and H.E. Mr. Goran Svilanović. Deputy Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Ivan Šimonović also attended the Summit as an observer.

21. H.E. Mr. Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission; H.E. Mr. Jan Kubis, Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; H.E. Mr. Guenther Altenburg, Assistant of the Secretary General of North Atlantic Treaty Organization; H.E. Mr. Erhard Busek, Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe; H.E. Mr. Charles Brayshaw, Principal Deputy of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General; H.E. Mr. Klaus Schumann Director General in the Council of Europe; attended the Summit as guests.

22. H.E. Mr. Vladimir Voronin, President, attended the Summit as a special invitee of the Chairman-in-Office. We have taken note of the his country's application to become a participating state of the SEECP and we tasked the Committee of Political Directors to examine this application, in accordance with Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South Eastern Europe and submit a report about it by the Summit Meeting in Sarajevo, at the latest.

23. We decided that during 2004/2005 the new Chairman-in-Office will be H.E. Mircea Geoana, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

24. We have decided that the next meeting of the Heads of State and Government will be held in Sarajevo in 2004.